IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A method of glycating a protein comprising the following steps:

combining a quantity of a reducing sugar with the protein in a solution;

lyophilizing the solution to produce a lyophilized sample;

placing said lyophilized sample under vacuum; and

heating said lyophilized sample under vacuum,

whereby a water-stable ketoamine derivative with amino groups in the protein, which does not rapidly revert to the free amine and sugar when placed in aqueous solution, is formed.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the sample is heated at a temperature in the range of about 40ºC to about 150ºC.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the reducing sugar is heated from 1 to 48 hours.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the reducing sugar is selected from the group consisting of 1 to 50 sugar units.

6. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the protein is lyophilized from a solution in the range of pH 2 to pH 12.